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TAGS: [ECON](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PNAT](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: KARKH RESIDENTS ON THE CHALLENGES OF DAILY LIFE

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. When asked in a meeting with PolOff to identify the most pressing issue affecting their lives, six residents of Baghdad's Karkh district (comprised of a mixture of Sunni, Shia, and Kurds) answered by highlighting the lack of electricity and its affect on their daily lives. Several went so far as to say that the lack of electricity was a more pressing issue than poor security. At the same time, all the residents maintained that Iraqi police could not be trusted, even under the new government. End Summary.

12. (C) On June 19, six residents of Baghdad's Karkh district told PolOff that the most pressing problem they faced was lack of electricity. They maintained that with just four hours of electricity per day, life had become very difficult. They noted that their neighborhood was dominated by high-rise apartment buildings and the lack of electricity affected air-conditioning, sewage and basic life needs (Note: Current temperatures in Baghdad are approaching 120 degrees Fahrenheit and are expected to reach 140 in August). Several in the group claimed that the electricity problem was more serious than security issues, even taking into account the internationally reported June 5 incident of an alleged 50-person kidnapping in the Karkh neighborhood of Salhiya.

13. (C) The group reported that lack of trust in Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) was also a major concern. "All Baghdad residents know who are conducting these nighttime raids" one resident said. "They appear in certain uniforms and drive certain types of cars -- it is no secret who these people are or that they are infiltrated by militias". One member of the group, a Shia Arab in his mid-fifties, recounted how his nephew had recently been detained by police who held him for a \$35,000 ransom. When asked how he knew the kidnappers were police, he responded by saying that his nephew told him he saw the face of one of the kidnappers and recognized him as a local police official.

14. (C) When asked whether the residents thought Baghdad security would improve in the next year, several said that it was difficult to give an opinion, but that they were beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel with the establishment of the new government. "We do not have a bad opinion of the new prime minister, nor the Interior Minister, but the people underneath are still bad and have associations with militia", one resident commented. When asked, none of the residents had any comments on the impact of the Baghdad security plan.
SATTERFIELD